

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Work Values Reflection

Identify priorities, recognize tradeoffs, and ask better job-fit questions

GRADES 9-12	TIME 2 x 42 min	FORMAT Individual + partner	PRODUCT Values profile
YOUR CHALLENGE Identify your most important work values, test them against realistic tradeoffs, compare two fictional job offers, and create questions that help you investigate whether a workplace actually supports what it promises.			

Learning Goals

- Define 12 common work values in your own words.
- Rank priorities without claiming every value can be maximized.
- Recognize value conflicts and acceptable tradeoffs.
- Use values as questions for career research and job evaluation.

Value	Student-friendly meaning
Security	Reliable income and stability
Achievement	Mastery, challenge, and accomplishment
Service	Helping people or communities
Independence	Choice over methods and decisions
Creativity	Producing original ideas or designs
Relationships	Belonging, teamwork, and positive interaction
Leadership	Influence, responsibility, and direction
Balance	Time and energy for life outside work
Variety	Changing tasks, people, or settings
Recognition	Visible credit, status, or appreciation
Learning	Continued growth and skill development
Structure	Clear rules, roles, and predictable processes

Warm-Up

Think of a school, work, team, or volunteer experience you enjoyed. Which condition made it positive? Name a condition that made another experience difficult.

Part 1 - Forced-Choice Sort

Place each value in exactly one column. You may not put more than four values in “Must protect.” This limit forces prioritization; it does not mean other values are unimportant.

Must protect (4)	Important but negotiable (4)	Nice to have (4)

Top Four Evidence

Top value	Past experience that supports it	What happened when this value was present or absent
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

Which value was hardest to place outside your top four? Why?

Part 2 - Value Conflict Scenarios

Scenario A

A creative job offers freedom and variety but unpredictable hours and income.

Values supported: _____ Values challenged: _____

Would you explore it further? State one condition or question that matters.

Scenario B

A stable job offers excellent benefits and clear structure but repetitive tasks.

Values supported: _____ Values challenged: _____

Would you explore it further? State one condition or question that matters.

Scenario C

A service role has strong purpose and relationships but lower starting pay than alternatives.

Values supported: _____ Values challenged: _____

Would you explore it further? State one condition or question that matters.

Scenario D

A leadership opportunity brings recognition and influence but reduces work-life balance for six months.

Values supported: _____ Values challenged: _____

Would you explore it further? State one condition or question that matters.

Part 3 - Fictional Job Offer Comparison

Factor	Offer Northstar	Offer Harbor
Annual pay	\$48,000	\$44,000
Schedule	Rotating evenings; posted monthly	Monday-Friday; two remote days
Training	Short onboarding; fast responsibility	Six-month mentorship and certification support
Work style	Independent caseload	Team projects and weekly coaching
Advancement	Possible after strong first year	Structured review at 18 months
Mission	Commercial customer growth	Community access and education
Benefits	Standard package	Standard package + additional paid leave

Rank your top four values from 1 (most important) to 4. Rate each offer 1-5 on each value. Weighted points = priority weight x rating, where weights are 4, 3, 2, 1.

Value	Weight	Northstar rating	Northstar points	Harbor rating	Harbor points
Top 1	4				
Top 2	3				
Top 3	2				
Top 4	1				
TOTAL					

Part 4 - Investigate the Claims

An offer letter and website cannot reveal the full workplace experience. Write questions that gather behavioral evidence rather than inviting yes/no promises.

Value to investigate	Weak question	Stronger evidence-seeking question
Balance	Is there work-life balance?	Describe a typical busy week and how schedule changes are communicated.
Learning	Do you train employees?	What did a new employee learn in the first 90 days, and how was progress supported?
Your value		
Your value		
Your value		

Reality Check

Which claim should be verified with a current employee?

Which condition could change after a manager or schedule change?

What information belongs in writing before accepting an offer?

Part 5 - Values Statement and Decision

Complete: “I do my best work when...” Include your top values, evidence from an experience, one acceptable tradeoff, and one boundary you would protect.

Which offer would you investigate first? Use matrix evidence and at least two details from the offer table. Name one uncertainty that prevents a final decision.

30-Day Test

Choose one value and design a small experience - course role, club task, job shadow, interview, project, or volunteer activity - that could test whether it matters as much as you think.

Self-Check

- ☐ I limited “Must protect” to four.
- ☐ I used experience evidence, not only ideals.
- ☐ I identified tradeoffs.
- ☐ My offer decision uses matrix and offer details.
- ☐ I wrote evidence-seeking questions.